United Nations E/2002/15/Add.1

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
16 April 2002

Original: English

Substantive session of 2002
New York, 1-26 July 2002
Item 10 of the provisional agenda*
Regional cooperation

Regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

Regional follow-up to world conferences and other global meetings

Summary

The present addendum to the report of the Secretary-General on regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields provides a succinct update to the Economic and Social Council on the role and activities of the regional commissions in respect of the regional preparations for, as well as the follow-up to, world conferences and other global meetings.

* E/2002/100.

02-33674 (E) 130502

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I. International Conference on Financing for Development

1. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 54/196 of 22 December 1999 as well as the decisions of the Preparatory Committee for the International Conference on Financing for Development, the five regional commissions held some 15 intergovernmental and expert group meetings in preparation for the International Conference on Financing for Development, convened in Monterrey, Mexico, from 18 to 22 March 2000 (see directly below).

Regional commission	*Title of event*	*Date and venue*
Economic Commission for Europe	Regional Consultative Meeting on Financing for Development in the European Region	6 and 7 December 2000, Geneva
	Regional expert meeting on enhancing the benefits of foreign direct investment (FDI) and improving the flow of corporate finance in the transition economies	3 December 2001, Geneva, hosted by ECE in cooperation with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific	Regional Consultative Meeting on Financing for Development in the Asia and Pacific Region	2-5 August 2000, Jakarta
	ESCAP/Asian Development Bank Joint Workshop on Mobilizing Domestic Finance for Development: Reassessment of Bank Finance and Debt Markets in Asia and the Pacific	22 and 23 November 2001, Bangkok
Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean	Regional Consultation on Financing for Development in the Latin America and Caribbean Region	9 and 10 November 2000, Bogotá
	First Latin American Colloquium on Development Banks	27 August 2001, ECLAC, Santiago
	High-level Panel on Financing for Sustainable Development (in the context of the Regional Preparatory Conference of Latin America and the Caribbean for the World Summit for Sustainable Development)	23 and 24 October 2001, Rio Centre, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
	Technical meeting on some key issues for a financing for development agenda	29 and 30 November 2001, ECLAC, Santiago
Economic Commission for Africa	Regional Consultative Meeting on Financing for Development in the African Region, and Preparatory Meeting for the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries	15-17 November 2000, Addis Ababa

Regional commission	*Title of event*	*Date and venue*
	Regional Expert Group Meeting on Financing for Development	26 and 27 November 2001, Nairobi, Kenya
Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia	Regional Consultation on Financing for Development in the Western Asia Region	23 and 24 November 2000, Beirut
	Round-table meeting on the report of the Secretary-General (A/AC.257/12)	7 June 2001
	Expert panel	6 July 2001
	Regional meeting on financing for development in preparation for the International Conference on Financing for Development in Mexico in 2002	11-13 September 2001, Beirut
All five commissions	Interregional conference on financing for development	14 and 15 January 2002, Mexico City

2. The above-mentioned events addressed wide-ranging issues and problems, including recurring foreign debt and currency crises; reduced levels of foreign and domestic resource mobilization; trade barriers; and systemic issues. Further, in the face of dynamic development of the international financial system and the capital market, much remains to be done in the various regions for adapting international standards for financial regulation and supervision. The events also considered ideas and proposals for strengthening regional, interregional and global cooperation in the related fields.

3. The regional events culminated in the holding of a joint meeting of the regional commissions on financing for development, which was hosted by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Government of Mexico in Mexico City on 14 and 15 January 2002. The interregional meeting reviewed in depth some of the key issues that had emanated from the previous regional meetings organized by the commissions, while also laying the groundwork for regional follow-up of the results of the Monterrey Conference. The outcome of this meeting was presented by the Executive Secretary of ECLAC to the Preparatory Committee for the International Conference on Financing for Development at its fourth session in January 2002.[1]

II. World Summit on Sustainable Development

4. In the preparatory process for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the meetings and related consultations of the regional commissions have been major building blocks in providing action-oriented recommendations for addressing the issues of sustainable development, based on their respective assessments of the implementation of Agenda 21.[2] The regional events were especially noteworthy for their new approach — one of "inclusiveness" with respect to the major stakeholders — in dealing with the issues of sustainability.

Economic Commission for Europe

5. The Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), in cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), convened the European Regional Ministerial Meeting on 24 and 25 September 2001, at the Palais des Nations, Geneva. A broad participatory process preceded the meeting, which included two regional consultative meetings and a number of subregional meetings organized through partnership involving the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, ECE, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNEP, the European Union (EU), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and several non-governmental organizations.

6. The central outcome of the meeting was the establishment of a regional platform in the form of a ministerial statement (E/CN.17/2002/PC.2/5/Add.1) that reaffirmed the region's commitment to the Rio Declaration on Environmental Development[3] and its strong commitment to sustainable development. The ministerial statement agreed on six priorities at the global level, as follows: poverty eradication; sustainable management and conservation of the natural resource base; making globalization work for sustainable development; improving governance and democratic processes at all levels; financing sustainable development; and education, science and technology for decision-making. Ministers also identified priority areas for action within the ECE region. In addition to voicing their concern over current consumption patterns and rising poverty in the region, ministers addressed a number of serious environmental problems such as emissions of greenhouse gases, air and water pollution, growing road and air transport, land degradation, desertification, loss of biodiversity, waste generation, technological hazards and risks to human health caused by harmful chemicals and living modified organisms, among others. They decided to hold the next comprehensive review of progress in the implementation of these priority actions at the latest in 2011 at a regional ministerial meeting.

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

7. The culmination of the regional preparatory process in the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) region, following five subregional meetings, was the High-level Regional Meeting for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, organized by ESCAP in collaboration with the Asian Development Bank (ADB), UNDP and UNEP in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, from 27 to 29 November 2001. The subregional meetings were organized by a task force comprising ESCAP, UNDP, UNEP and ADB.

8. The outcome of the Meeting was the Phnom Penh Regional Platform on Sustainable Development for Asia and the Pacific (E/CN.17/2002/PC.2/8), which identified a number of key regional issues and priorities for sustainable development. The Platform recommended priority attention to seven initiatives in the following areas (ibid., sect. III.B): capacity-building for sustainable development; poverty reduction for sustainable development; cleaner production and sustainable energy; land management and biodiversity conservation; protection and management of and access to freshwater resources; oceans, coastal and marine

resources and sustainable development of small island States; and action on atmosphere and climate change.

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

9. ECLAC joined in an inter-agency partnership with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UNEP and UNDP to organize the Latin American and Caribbean regional preparatory process for the World Summit on Sustainable Development. This process included four subregional meetings held during June and July 2001.

10. The Regional Preparatory Conference adopted the Rio de Janeiro Platform for Action on the Road to Johannesburg 2002 (E/CN.17/2002/PC.2/5/Add.2), as the region's contribution to the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The Platform for Action reaffirmed the principles and commitments agreed upon previously, identified the obstacles and lessons learned throughout the last decade, and assumed new commitments in order to meet the remaining challenges and explore new forms of cooperation that might accelerate the transition towards sustainable development.

11. ECLAC and UNDP followed up on the regional Platform for Action by organizing a side event in the nature of a panel discussion at the International Conference on Financing for Development entitled "Financing for Sustainable Development: Partnerships for Investment Opportunities between the Public and the Private Sectors in Latin America and the Caribbean". The panel, organized jointly by ECLAC, UNDP and the INNOVA Centre for Sustainable Development (a private sector network of Latin America and the Caribbean headquartered in Mexico), examined opportunities for public-private partnerships and joint ventures for enterprises that are sustainable and contribute to achieving the millennium development goals through the implementation of Agenda 21.

Economic Commission for Africa

12. The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) worked closely with other United Nations bodies and African regional and subregional organizations within the context of a Joint Secretariat (comprising ECA, UNDP, UNDP/Capacity 21, the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the Organization of African Unity (OAU), and the economic groupings of the five regions — the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) — to coordinate the African regional preparatory process for the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Activities undertaken in this regard included the meeting of the Joint Secretariat held in Dakar in March 2001 and a regional ministerial Preparatory Conference held in Nairobi in October 2001 to assess progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 in Africa. The meeting also adopted a ministerial statement (E/CN.17/2002/PC.2/5/Add.4) which articulated the African common position on the review and further implementation of Agenda 21.

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

13. The preparations of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) for the Johannesburg Summit was spearheaded by a Joint Secretariat, established in May 2001, comprising ESCWA, the Technical Secretariat of the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE) and the UNEP Regional Office for West Asia (UNEP-ROWA). Regional preparations were held in collaboration with the League of Arab States and other regional organizations, including the Joint Committee on Environment and Development in the Arab Region (JCEDAR). Within this joint partnership framework, and in preparation for the Summit, ESCWA organized seven regional preparatory events, including meetings to involve various stakeholders and interest groups (non-governmental organizations, parliamentarians, industry etc.), culminating in the Joint Meeting of CAMRE and the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN). The result was the formulation of a regional platform (see A/CONF.199/PC/11) outlining key policy issues, priorities and follow-up actions to be addressed at the Summit.

III. Twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly entitled "World Summit for Social Development and beyond: achieving social development for all in a globalizing world"

Economic Commission for Europe

14. As part of an ongoing review of implementation of the recommendations of the World Summit for Social Development, ECE has been working with other partners in the field of statistics. It organized a seminar in July 2001with the University of Geneva and the Swiss Federal Statistical Office on the growing concern regarding the "digital divide", and on the need to compile comparative educational indicators to track the international mobility of skilled labour and students. Also, with the support of UNDP, ECE has continued to publish "Statistics for Social Progress", making available the statistical implications of the framework for monitoring social development adopted at the 1995 Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development.

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

15. In 2001, ESCAP concentrated its work on the major themes of poverty reduction, managing globalization and emerging social issues. It organized an expert group meeting to take stock of the progress achieved in the regional implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development[4] and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development.[5] There were also workshops and seminars set up in Bangkok on promoting human security; on integrating paid and unpaid work; and on evaluating employment-generating programmes. For the 2002 annual session of the Commission, the theme topic chosen was "Sustained social development in a period of rapid globalization". Along the same lines, following last year's session of the Committee on Socio-economic Measures to

Alleviate Poverty in Rural and Urban Areas, alleviating rural poverty is receiving heightened attention as an emerging issue among the region's member States through the application of information and communication technologies (ICT) in rural poverty reduction policies, and this is also perceived as a means to counteract the growing phenomenon of urban poverty.

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

16. ECLAC has continued to actively follow up on the Copenhagen Social Summit, bringing out a number of studies on job creation and on the isolation of the urban poor, as well as publishing the *Social Panorama of Latin America, 2000-2001*. The publication highlights the region's achievements and challenges in the fight against poverty, and suggests that the region would require a sustained increase in per capita output of no less than 3.8 per cent annually in order to meet the goals of the United Nations Millennium Declaration.[6] In this regard, ECLAC together with Michigan State University held a regional conference last year on the topic of "Social capital and poverty reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean".

Economic Commission for Africa

17. As part of the follow-up to the World Summit for Sustainable Development, ECA organized, during the reporting period, a training workshop on public intervention in poverty reduction in Ethiopia; held a number of forums with its member States on the preparation of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs); and, in collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), organized an expert group meeting on developing an information technology (IT) infrastructure at the regional and subregional levels to support the education sector in Africa. ECA also participated in an inter-agency meeting for the Second World Assembly on Ageing in New York, and in the Global Employment Forum organized by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in Geneva, which emphasized the importance of incorporating employment-creating strategies in national policies as part of a comprehensive approach to development.

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

18. ESCWA continues to implement a number of interrelated activities as follow-up action to the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly. On poverty reduction, ESCWA has been using a "pioneer" approach based on community development for mobilizing available capacities among all segments of society, and for developing cooperation and group self-reliance as the principal means of achieving local development. On employment, ESCWA published a study in 2001 on globalization and the labour markets in the region, recommending several measures to upgrade the skills requirements and flexibility of the labour force in order to respond to the needs of globalization. ESCWA held a training workshop on the preparation of national reports for follow-up to the global conferences, and conducted a field study to evaluate the impact of poverty reduction policies implemented by some of its member States.

IV. Twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Economic Commission for Europe

19. The expertise of ECE in the areas of statistics, environment, population and technology is helping its member States to implement the Beijing Platform for Action,[7] especially in respect of assisting women living in countries with economies in transition. In 2001, it established the First Forum of Women Entrepreneurs, and introduced the ECE virtual gallery of women entrepreneurs. Together with the UNDP Regional Offices, United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the World Bank, it held a number of training workshops on e-commerce in the countries in transition and, in 2002, with the support of UNDP, it launched a Regional Gender Indicator Web Site. Additionally, with the support of the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues of the United Nations Secretariat, ECE adopted a work programme that indicates the gender-mainstreaming actions to be undertaken within specific areas of work in the Commission.

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

20. ESCAP has organized a series of expert group meetings, regional seminars and training workshops as follow-up to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly in the areas of women in poverty, globalization, peace, violence against women, human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS), and women's decision-making and local governance. With funds provided by donor partners, ESCAP held expert group meetings on social safety nets for women (Netherlands); on ICT policy from a gender perspective (Japan); and on gender equality and ICT (Republic of Korea). This year it is holding regional and subregional seminars on using legal instruments to combat trafficking in women and children (Netherlands). Together with the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, it held the first "Asian and Pacific Regional Symposium on Gender Mainstreaming". With UNDP and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, it held a training workshop for the South Pacific on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,[8] and this year, Fiji became the first Pacific country to report to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

21. As part of follow-up to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, ECLAC developed gender indicators on behalf of all the regional commissions, under the umbrella of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality; and, together with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UNIFEM, gave technical assistance to its member States for data collection, following the core set of indicators it had developed. As a result, last year, on International Women's Day, ECLAC launched a compilation of regional data and gender indicators on its web site, which included 24 country profiles. ECLAC, as

part of a series of ongoing regional seminars, held a seminar in 2001 on mainstreaming a gender perspective in sectoral ministries. In 2002, it designed an inter-agency project on capacity-building of national machineries for governance with a gender perspective in Latin America, and the project is to be implemented during 2002-2004 with funds from the Development Account. ECLAC will be collaborating in this project with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and ECA, which has already implemented a similar project in Africa.

Economic Commission for Africa

22. ECA, through its newly renamed African Centre for Gender and Development (ACGD), devised a three-pronged strategy to: (a) monitor and evaluate the follow-up and implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action by assisting its member States in improving their technical capacity to keep track of the progress on the status of women; (b) develop an African Gender and Development Index to measure gender equality in the 12 critical areas of concern, results of which will be available in this year's ECA flagship publication, *African Women's Report*; and, (c) provide stakeholders, including civil society organizations, with monitoring and advocacy tools in the form of 53 country gender profiles. ECA provided advisory services and training workshops in 2001 to member States, as well as regional organizations, in gender mainstreaming; formulation and implementation of policies and programmes for women empowerment; strategies for implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; and needs assessment and partnership-building; and it continues to address the critical problem of HIV/AIDS including the pandemic's effect on women and girls. Its publication *Gender Mainstreaming in National Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers* serves as a guide for incorporating a gender dimension in the preparation process for the PRSPs in Africa.

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

23. ESCWA actively pursued the strategic objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action by organizing, together with UNDP, a regional meeting of the National Coordination Committee on Arab Women in 2001. ESCWA was the project adviser, in collaboration with the Centre of Arab Women for Training and Research in Tunis and the League of Arab States, for the publication *Globalization and Gender: Economic Participation of Arab Women* (Tunis, 2001). It prepared three studies on the situation of women in the region which were presented to the Arab Conference on Women and Poverty: A Gender Perspective, which was jointly organized in 2001 by ESCWA, the League of Arab States, UNDP, UNFPA and UNIFEM. ESCWA also launched in 2001 a media campaign in Beirut, in collaboration with the Johns Hopkins Communications Centre, to raise gender awareness. The campaign consisted of 15 weekly television series on the Beijing critical areas of concern, and three television spots (60 seconds each) focusing on women and education, women and employment and women and legislation. In 2002, ESCWA in collaboration with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, will submit to the Development Account for funding, a project on technical assistance to national machineries for women in capacity- and institution-building

V. Twenty-first special session of the General Assembly to review and appraise the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development

Economic Commission for Europe

24. ECE included a set of priorities for its work for the period 2000-2003, based on the new approach taken by the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development[9] of placing the individual at the centre of the population and development debate. The main proposal of a future programme on reproductive rights and gender equality entitled "Generations and Gender: Research into their Behaviour and Quality of Life (GGP)" was approved by the Conference of European Statisticians, with UNFPA providing its initial support. As a result, GGP is part of the UNFPA intercountry programme for 2002-2003. In 2001, the Working Group of GGP, at its first meeting, recommended, among other matters, that, in order to launch a programme on comparative analysis, standardized national data sets would be centrally archived at the Population Activities Unit of ECE.

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

25. One of the goals of ESCAP is to assist its member and associate member States in formulating, implementing and monitoring their population and reproductive health policies. This is accomplished through intercountry comparative research and analysis of trends and patterns; through the exchange of experiences through seminars and training workshops with academia and research institutions on population and development; and through the provision of technical assistance and advisory missions in close cooperation with UNFPA. The Commission organized in 2001 an expert group meeting on migration and development, focusing on the benefits of several billions of United States dollars to families living in poverty, as well as on the damages resulting from large-scale trafficking in humans, of whom it is estimated that a quarter-million are women and children. ESCAP also held in March 2002, in partnership with UNFPA, a Preparatory Committee meeting in preparation for the Fifth Asian Pacific Population Conference to be convened later this year.

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

26. ECLAC, through the Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE) and in close cooperation with UNFPA, started to develop, during the reporting period, a regional system of International Conference on Population and Development indicators which have been incorporated into the WinR+plan software developed by CELADE. This software is available on CD-ROM and will soon be accessible through the Internet. CELADE is further extending the system of indicators to other global conferences, and it is proposing to work together with the Women and Development Unit of ECLAC, with the support of UNFPA, to develop a system of regional indicators for the implementation of the programmes of action of

the Fourth World Conference on Women and the International Conference on Population and Development. Also, CELADE, with the collaboration of the International Organization for Migration, held a workshop last year to train professionals working in relevant Central American public agencies on the basic analysis of census information on international migration.

Economic Commission for Africa

27. Within the context of follow-up to global conferences, ECA, together with OAU and AfDB and in collaboration with UNFPA, organized the Fourth Meeting of the Follow-up Committee on the Implementation of the Dakar/Ngor Declaration on Population, Family and Sustainable Development (see E/CONF.84/PC/13, annex) and Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development in Cameroon in January 2002. The meeting discussed the population perspectives in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and decided that the 10-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development in the Africa region would focus on poverty, HIV/AIDS, youth, migration and gender. Other substantive activity on the follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development in 2001 included the ECA publication *Africa: Demographic, Environmental and Agricultural Indicators*.

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

28. ESCWA has been developing a multidisciplinary database with UNFPA on population and development goals emanating from international and regional conferences, and its final version was launched in 2001 during a regional training workshop held in Beirut. Once put to use, the new system will enable users to monitor the implementation of the plans of actions emanating from the International Conference on Population and Development and other global conferences, in terms of population size and distribution; fertility and reproductive health; mortality and morbidity; gender equity and empowerment of women; and resource mobilization and partnership with the civil society. Other major activities in 2001 included a joint ESCWA/League of Arab States meeting of the Population Council, held in Rabat, Morocco.

VI. Twenty-fifth special session of the General Assembly for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)

Economic Commission for Europe

29. The Ministers of Housing and Spatial Planning met at the ECE Committee on Human Settlements in 2000 and adopted a Strategy and a Ministerial Declaration for a Sustainable Quality of Life in Human Settlements in the Twenty-first Century. In 2001, the Committee met to implement the Strategy and decided, among other

issues, to prepare a study on social housing policies, and to hold a future workshop to provide definitions of types of social housing. The workshop would focus on cooperation among all partners — landlords, investors, tenants and housing developers — and among international organizations such as the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) (transformed into the secretariat of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) by General Assembly resolution 56/206, sect. I.B), the Council of Europe and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to bring together all aspects of housing under the umbrella of "right to housing". In 2002, the Committee held its ninth Conference on Urban and Regional Research on Sustainable and Liveable Cities in Leeds, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, with the aim of assisting policy makers in decision-making and of contributing to a better understanding of future requirements in this area.

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

30. During the reporting period, ESCAP produced guidelines for localizing the Habitat Agenda,[10] developing a "Pacific Habitat Agenda" adapted to the specific needs of the Pacific island States. It held the first-ever Asia-Pacific Summit of Women Mayors and Councillors in Phitsanulok, Thailand, in 2001. It supported regional networks such as Network of Local Government Training and Research Institutes in Asia and the Pacific and CityNet, and convened a series of meetings to coordinate activities in support of the Habitat Agenda undertaken by UNDP, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) and CityNet.

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

31. The Latin American and Caribbean Regional Preparatory Conference on the five-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) adopted the Santiago Declaration on Human Settlements in 2000. On the basis of its recommendations, ECLAC convened two parallel events during the twenty-fifth special session of the General Assembly in 2001. One event was to update the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Plan of Action on Human Settlements, and to agree to develop specific indicators to assess the regional progress in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. The second event was held at the recommendation of member States to consult with multilateral agencies and financial institutions on the feasibility of establishing an inter-agency committee, a matter still being discussed in 2002.

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

32. The Manama Declaration on Cities and Human Settlements in the New Millennium (HS/C/PC.2/2/Add.6, annex I) was adopted in Bahrain in 2000, at the high-level Arab meeting for follow-up to the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. In follow-up to its recommendations, ESCWA participated in a meeting in New York in 2001 with regional partners, counterparts in New York and Arab national counterparts on progress made in the implementation of the project on urban

indicators fostered by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat). Currently, ESCWA has started the urban indicators project by providing technical assistance to four municipalities in Lebanon. ESCWA will also launch the regional components of the two global campaigns launched by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) on security of tenure and good urban governance through regional activities identified in its programme of work for the biennium 2002-2003.

VII. Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

33. ESCAP has established a Poverty Centre in collaboration with UNDP which, among other objectives, will review the major indicators of the millennium development goals. This will also enable the monitoring of the progress of the least developed countries at the country level towards achieving the goals set by the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 (A/CONF.191/11), which emanated from the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Brussels in May 2001.

34. In order to give focus to the Commission's activities in the least developed countries of the region, ESCAP has fielded needs assessment missions to a number of these countries, addressing issues of development planning in Cambodia, as well as space applications for geologic surveys and World Trade Organization agreements, trade and investment in Myanmar.

35. At the implementation level, ESCAP and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) have held discussions about holding a regional workshop to examine the direction for post-Doha agriculture negotiations and its implications for the least developed countries, as follow-up to commitments 4.E and 5 of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010. ESCAP has also submitted a project proposal under the Development Account entitled "Interregional collaboration to enhance the capacity of least developed countries for effective integration into the global economy" which aims at strengthening the capacity of these countries to benefit from their accession to regional free trade areas as well as the World Trade Organization and the adoption of duty-free and quota-free access by the industrialized countries. The project will be implemented in collaboration with UNCTAD as well as other regional commissions.

Economic Commission for Africa

36. During the period under review, ECA undertook a comprehensive assessment of the economic and social condition in the African least developed countries. The report, to be published in mid-2002, reveals that the gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate for the African least developed countries as a group was 5.2 per cent in 2001, and is expected to improve slightly, reaching 5.6 per cent in 2002. However, as the report notes, the perception of this positive development must be tempered by an awareness of a number of factors, including the very small base of these

economies; the continuous decline in levels of growth that persisted for many years in these countries; the global decline in the primary commodity prices that has hit some of these countries; the protracted armed conflict in some of these countries; and the effect of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

37. ECA prepared several studies and undertook other policy-relevant work designed to enhance the capacity of African countries for effective participation in international trade. It also provided technical assistance to African trade negotiators, within the context of negotiations in the World Trade Organization, in negotiating the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP)-EU Cooperation Agreements, and in the area of trade policy reforms.

38. ECA participated in the series of meetings organized by the World Trade Organization and UNCTAD to assist the least developed countries in preparing for the Fourth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization held in Doha, Qatar, in November 2001. In addition, ECA organized a high-level brainstorming preparatory meeting in Addis Ababa in June 2001, to get African countries ready for the Fourth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization. With 34 out of the world's 49 least developed countries in Africa, the effective integration of these countries into the global economy has become a major focus of the work of ECA. In this regard, ECA intends to continue to strengthen its collaboration with UNCTAD, the World Trade Organization, the World Bank and other United Nations bodies in providing the necessary support to African least developed countries.

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

39. Special attention has been given to the only least developed country of the region, namely, Yemen, in terms of debt-relief measures. A project, to be financed from extrabudgetary resources, has been formulated to promote foreign direct investment (FDI) in Yemen, which includes establishing a foreign direct investment database and a foreign direct investment policy document. This project would be implemented jointly with UNCTAD.

VIII. Twenty-second special session of the General Assembly for the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

40. ESCAP continues to give high priority to its 19 members and associate members from the Pacific subregion whose economic growth has been low to moderate in recent years. Largely as a result, there have been some setbacks in per capita income and domestic employment in those countries, which have had an impact on their living standards and poverty alleviation efforts. Globalization poses further challenges for Pacific island countries, especially their ability to better integrate into the globalizing economy driven increasingly by rapid advances in ICT.

41. ESCAP continues to implement various technical assistance programmes for the benefit of Pacific island countries in response to their requests as well as in

follow-up to world conferences and global meetings. Such assistance has enabled Pacific island countries to better prepare themselves for participation at global meetings like those of the World Trade Organization and the Global Conference on Small Island Developing States. A large part of these activities continue to be channelled through the ESCAP Pacific Operations Centre (ESCAP/POC), located in Vanuatu, and supplemented by activities implemented from Bangkok headquarters and from the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific in Tokyo. ESCAP also implemented a total of 50 activities with Pacific island participation under its economic cooperation among developing countries and technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC/ECDC) activities. A total of 50 activities were implemented under this programme during 2000-2001. The majority of these were human resource development activities and are implemented in cooperation with several member Governments under their national TCDC programmes. ESCAP, especially through ESCAP/POC, cooperates very closely with subregional organizations, such as the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat.

42. ESCAP, in collaboration with UNDP, UNEP, ADB and the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), organized a subregional preparatory meeting for the World Summit for Social Development for Pacific island countries in Apia, Samoa, in September 2001. The outcome of this meeting assisted in incorporating the Pacific viewpoint into the Phnom Penh Regional Platform on Sustainable Development for Asia and the Pacific. ESCAP set up the Pacific Trust Fund in 1988 to ensure that Pacific island countries actively participated in the annual Commission sessions, thereby mainstreaming them into its activities. In addition, the Special Body on Pacific Island Developing Countries provides an avenue for the identification by Pacific island countries of their priority areas for technical assistance from ESCAP.

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

43. The Caribbean Ministerial Meeting on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States,[11] held in Barbados in November 1997, established the Caribbean Model for the implementation of the Programme of Action, with ECLAC serving as the operational arm of a joint implementation secretariat, while the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) was entrusted with the political outreach required. By mid-2001, with the 1997 joint work programme almost fully implemented, an updated joint work programme, coordinated by ECLAC encompassing social and economic as well as environmental components, was adopted.

44. For the rest of 2001, the activities focused on the issues, priorities and challenges relating to Agenda 21 within the context of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. ECLAC and UNEP convened the Preparatory Meeting of the Caribbean for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, which took place in Havana, Cuba, in June 2001. There, Governments also had a chance to review national activities and the experience of the Inter-Agency Collaborative Group regarding the process for the review of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

45. ECLAC presented to the meeting a document entitled "The Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and Agenda 21: The Road to Johannesburg 2002", which reviews the implementation of the joint work programme and the issues that must be addressed in relation to the implementation of the Programme of Action and Agenda 21. In addition to this, ECLAC also prepared a research paper providing an analysis of economic and social development in Barbados entitled "Barbados: A Model for Small Island Developing States".

IX. Twenty-sixth special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS

Economic Commission for Europe

46. In 2001, ECE prepared a conference room paper for its annual session, focusing on the economic and social roots of the proliferation of the infection in the region. HIV/AIDS concerns will be integrated into the agenda of the "Forum on Youth: Security, Opportunity and Prosperity" being organized by ECE in 2002 in cooperation with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, with the aim of working out economically efficient preventive measures that could be executed with youth participation.

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

47. ESCAP has integrated HIV/AIDS concerns into its work on human resources, developing a multisectoral response to the epidemic. At the national level, it: (a) offers training to national personnel to provide more effective programme coverage of vulnerable groups; (b) promotes the integration of HIV/AIDS as a youth health concern into national programmes; and (c) has initiated the direct participation of people living with AIDS in ESCAP-supported forums on HIV/AIDS. At the regional/global level, it: (a) collaborates closely with the Joint United Nations Programme on Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) (UNAIDS) in involving political leaders, as well as business and civil society leaders, in regional meetings; (b) encourages member States to learn from the lessons of the African experience in dealing with the HIV/AIDS epidemic; and (c) has posted, for web site dissemination, a bibliography on the assessment and mitigation of the impact of transport infrastructure and services on the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Economic Commission for Africa

48. ECA has undertaken a number of activities in support of the goals articulated in various HIV/AIDS forums. It created a Health Economics Unit to serve as the focal point for HIV/AIDS, conducting policy-relevant research and providing advisory services to member States on HIV/AIDS and health in general. It is collaborating with other organizations in the following: (a) with OAU, in developing a mechanism for monitoring and reporting on the Abuja Declaration on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Other Related Infectious Diseases, to be endorsed at the next

Summit of African Heads of State and Government of OAU; (b) with UNDP, in its Regional Project on HIV/AIDS and Development; and (c) with UNAIDS, the World Health Organization (WHO) and OAU, in preparing an annual report to monitor the Abuja Declaration and resolution S-26/2 of the special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS. The report will serve as an advocacy tool in the fight against the epidemic and will promote dialogue on the challenges of reducing the burden.

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

49. ESCWA has been developing a regional agenda for HIV/AIDS. In this respect, it took part in the first Regional Meeting of UNAIDS held in Cairo in 2001, and in the UNESCO regional seminar in Lebanon on HIV/AIDS education in the school system. ESCWA is planning, as the secretariat of the inter-agency Regional Coordination Group, to request at its next meeting in 2002, the establishment of a thematic working group on HIV/AIDS as a coordinating mechanism to expand country, subregional and regional collaboration on HIV prevention and care in the ESCWA region.

X. Second World Assembly on Ageing

Economic Commission for Europe

50. ECE, collaborating with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, WHO and ILO, took a three-track approach to preparing for the Second World Assembly on Ageing which will feed its Ministerial Conference on Ageing to be held in Berlin in September 2002. This approach included: (a) experts seminars in Burgos, Spain; and Vienna in 2001 on topics such as economic security and sustainable growth in an ageing world, and on the changing life course and intergenerational solidarity; (b) intergovernmental informal consultations on the regional implementation strategy; and (c) input from civil society and non-governmental organizations, such as the Geneva International Network on Ageing (GINA), the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) and HelpAge International. In 2002, ECE held a round-table presentation during the Madrid Second World Assembly on Ageing on "Social and economic implications of ageing in the ECE region".

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

51. The Asia and Pacific region is expected to experience a growth in its ageing population from 320 million to about 700 million by the year 2025. In response to this demographic change, ESCAP, in 2001, convened an intergovernmental preparatory consultation on ageing in Macao Special Administrative Region (SAR) of China. Its recommendations on income security, health, social services, community and family support, and regional cooperation were transmitted as regional input to the second session of the Commission for Social Development acting as the preparatory committee for the Second World Assembly on Ageing. Other activities included a regional workshop in Manila on strengthening national

policies on ageing, and a regional seminar in Macao SAR on social services for older persons.

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

52. In preparation for the Second World Assembly on Ageing, ECLAC and UNFPA undertook a joint presentation of the publication *Ageing and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean* at the Ibero-American Preparatory Meeting in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, in 2001. At the meeting, ECLAC together with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), UNFPA and the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) distributed regional guidelines for preparation of country reports on ageing for the Madrid Second World Assembly on Ageing. As a result of such collaboration, ECLAC, PAHO, IADB, UNFPA and the Programme on Ageing of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat have created an inter-agency working group on ageing as a follow-up mechanism arising from the recommendations of the Second World Assembly on Ageing. This year, prior to the Madrid Second World Assembly on Ageing, ECLAC presented a regional paper on the economic participation of older persons at the Valencia Forum, organized by IADB. ECLAC sponsored seminars on older persons with regional non-governmental organizations, and published a series of documents on Latin America's pension systems and regional indicators on the ageing population.

Economic Commission for Africa

53. ECA hosted the Department of Economic and Social Affairs Expert Group Meeting on Sustainable Social Structures in a Society for All Ages in Addis Ababa in May 2000, with the financial support of the Government of the United Kingdom and with logistic support provided by the non-governmental organization HelpAge International. Since then, the Commission has used the population, environment, development and agriculture (PEDA) model to show its member States how the ageing population in developing countries will directly affect production, consumption, savings, investment and the labour market. It finalized a study entitled "State of the Demographic Transition in Africa", on policies that decision makers and development planners must pursue to facilitate the process of the demographic transition in Africa, and it cooperated with academia in a survey of older persons in Africa.

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

54. ESCWA held an Arab Ministerial Preparatory Meeting for the World Assembly on Ageing in Beirut in 2002, and adopted the Arab Plan of Action on Ageing up to the Year 2012. The principal aim of the Plan of Action is to reinforce the relationship between generations as the patterns of family life change, and set in place legislation to ensure that ageing persons receive care within their families. During the Madrid Second World Assembly on Ageing, ESCWA held a panel presentation on the Arab Plan of Action on Ageing for its member States.

XI. Twenty-seventh special session of the General Assembly on children

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

55. In preparation for the Second World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, held at Yokohama, Japan, in December 2001, ESCAP held an East Asia and the Pacific Regional Consultation in October 2001 in Bangkok and, together with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), it presented their joint report on the review of the achievements of the Plan of Action for implementing the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children in the 1990s,[12] adopted at the World Summit for Children. During the consultation, it was agreed that ESCAP and UNICEF would establish a regional inter-agency committee in 2002 to monitor implementation in the region of the outcome of the World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, held at Stockholm in 1996. In addition, ESCAP and ILO held a joint training course on psychological and medical services for sexually exploited children and youth in November 2001. Similar national-level courses are planned throughout the region in 2002.

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

56. At the Tenth Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State and Government, held in Panama in November 2000, the Heads of State and Government requested that ECLAC, in close coordination with UNICEF and the Secretariat of Ibero-American Cooperation, should carry out an evaluation of the current situation of children and adolescents in Ibero-America. The document would identify objectives for improving current tendencies in education, health care, sanitary services and the eradication of child labour, among other areas. The result of this coordination was the publication entitled *Building Equity from the Beginning: The Children and Youth of Ibero-America*, presented at the Third Ibero-American Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials, held in October 2001, in Lima, Peru.

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

57. ESCWA, together with UNICEF and in partnership with the League of Arab States, held a Regional Symposium on Children in April 2001 in Beirut to set the groundwork for the Arab High-level Conference on Children, held in Cairo in July 2001. The symposium reviewed the Arab countries' progress in achieving the goals set at the 1990 World Summit for Children, shared best practices and proposed strategies to meet the unfulfilled goals that required further action. The symposium coincided with the regional launch of the campaign entitled "Say Yes for Children", which aims to induce people to pledge their support for 10 key actions needed to improve the lives of children everywhere. The campaign will be incorporated into the outcome document of the twenty-seventh special session of the General Assembly on children, making the campaign a vital link to the special session.

XII. World Summit on the Information Society

Economic Commission for Europe

58. ECE, in the preparatory process of the World Summit on the Information Society, will be acting as the focal point for all the regional commissions, disseminating information and liaising with the Summit/International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Executive Secretariat in Geneva.

59. ECE organized, together with the UNDP European Regional Office, an informal regional expert meeting in April 2002, to discuss how an European regional network for ICT for development could be set up, and to examine other initiatives such as the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Task Force and the G-8 Digital Opportunities Task Force (dot force). Participants reflected on the theme for the first Summit preparatory meeting in Geneva in July 2002 and suggested, pursuant to the request made by ITU to all the regional commissions, possible themes for the World Summit on the Information Society European Regional Preparatory Meeting in Bucharest in November 2002, and for the Summit in Geneva in 2003.

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

60. ESCAP and the ITU regional office for Asia and the Pacific, as well as the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT), work together on preparing the regional inputs for the World Summit on the Information Society, and they jointly convened the first working group meeting in August 2001. In addition, ESCAP has established a Regional ICT Network, as mandated by the ICT Task Force as a key implementing mechanism for the United Nations Millennium Declaration, and is in the process of establishing a separate subprogramme on ICT. ESCAP as a member of the ITU Taskforce on Gender and ICT, has been working with various stakeholders to promote empowerment of women through the use of ICT; conducting research studies; implementing projects such as Women's Electronic Networking Training; and coordinating a system-wide strategy to ensure that a gender perspective is included in the outcome of the World Summit on the Information Society.

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

61. ECLAC convened an expert group meeting on Latin America on the road towards the digital age, held in Santiago in November 2001, to discuss different aspects of the transition towards the digital age. It presented two papers on the theme topic which will soon be published as a book. ECLAC also held the first meeting in Santiago in May 2002, to support the development of a regional network within the framework of the ICT Task Force. The culmination of the Latin America and the Caribbean preparatory process for the Summit will be a regional conference, tentatively scheduled for May 2003.

Economic Commission for Africa

62. ECA is actively engaged in activities aimed at preparing the countries of the region for the World Summit on the Information Society. In this regard, ECA organized an African Regional Conference in Bamako in May 2002, to assess the challenges, opportunities and constraints relating to the information society in Africa, and to develop a common position for the World Summit on the Information Society. The outcome of the regional conference will be a key input to the first global preparatory meeting to be held under the auspices of ECE in Geneva in July 2002.

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

63. Within its recent restructuring exercise, ESCWA has dedicated an entire thematic subprogramme, with a corresponding structure in the secretariat, on ICT to respond to the needs of the region, which needs to make a quantum leap in this field if it is to benefit from globalization. ESCWA will organize a regional preparatory meeting for the World Summit on the Information Society that will develop themes and recommendations for the Summit.

Notes

[1] For a more in-depth review of the regional perspectives on the subject, please refer to the reports of the Executive Secretaries included in document E/2002/15.

[2] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

[3] Ibid., annex I.

[4] *Report of the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 6-12 March 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.8), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

[5] Ibid., annex II.

[6] See General Assembly resolution 55/2.

[7] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

[8] General Assembly resolution 34/180, annex.

[9] *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5-13 September 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

[10] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), Istanbul, 3-14 June 1996* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.97.IV.6) chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

[11] *Report of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Bridgetown, Barbados, 25 April-6 May 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.I.18 and corrigenda), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

[12] See *First Call for Children* (New York, UNICEF, 1990), part one.